

Proposed Language for Precondition 1 to Address Institutions that are not Regionally Accredited March 2011

Overview of this Report

At the January 2011 meeting an agenda item was presented to the COA on the responsibilities of institutions approved to offer educator preparation programs (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2011-01/2011-01-item-09.pdf>). After discussion, the COA asked staff to prepare an agenda item with proposed language for Precondition 1 which would clarify the responsibilities that all institutions that sponsor educator preparation programs must fulfill.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item. Based on the COA's discussion, staff will prepare an action item for the April 2011 COA meeting.

Background

The Commission's Preconditions and Common Standards outline what an approved entity must do to offer one or more educator preparation programs in California. Precondition 1 specifies that all institutions (i.e., colleges and universities, or IHEs) must be regionally accredited while school districts (i.e., school districts and county offices of education) must have verification submitted by the Superintendent that the governing board has approved sponsorship of the program. There is no language within Precondition 1 that addresses entities that are not colleges, universities, school districts or county offices of education. Precondition 1 is presented below:

- (1) **Accreditation and Academic Credit.** To be granted initial institutional accreditation by the Commission to become eligible to submit programs or to be granted initial program accreditation or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program(s) must be proposed and operated by an institution that (a) is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges or another of the six regional accrediting associations, and (b) grants baccalaureate academic credit or post baccalaureate academic credit, or both. (This provision does not apply to professional preparation programs offered by school districts.)

For school districts wishing to offer a professional preparation program, the Superintendent of the district shall submit verification of the governing board's approval of sponsorship of the program.

At the January 2011 meeting, the COA agreed that the current General Preconditions do not clearly or adequately address the responsibilities for entities that are not regionally accredited.

There is another area, however, where Precondition 1 may also not be sufficiently explicit. This is the area of the institution's responsibility to enrolled candidates when a previously approved program may be closing. For institutions of higher education (IHEs), regional accreditation addresses the overarching institution-wide issues such as catalog rights and the closing of programs. With respect to program closure, WASC also confirms that all programs at WASC-

accredited institutions are expected to teach-out all students when a program is going to close voluntarily. In addition, WASC indicates that this policy is in keeping with the federal policy on candidate rights and the closure of programs at an institution of higher education.

Possible Revised Language for Precondition 1

Provided below is a draft of a revised Precondition 1 for the COA's discussion that addresses both of the concepts discussed above:

- (1) **Accreditation and Academic Credit.** To be granted initial institutional accreditation by the Commission to become eligible to submit programs or to be granted initial program accreditation or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program(s) must be proposed and operated by a college or university that (a) is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges or another of the six regional accrediting associations, and (b) grants baccalaureate academic credit or post baccalaureate academic credit, or both. (This provision does not apply to professional preparation programs offered by school districts.)

For school districts or other non-regionally accredited entities wishing to offer an educator preparation program, the Superintendent or CEO of the district or entity shall submit verification of the governing board's approval of sponsorship of the program. The agreement to sponsor a program must include verification of the following:

Once a candidate is accepted and enrolls in an educator preparation program, the sponsor must provide the approved program, meeting the adopted standards, until the candidate:

- i) completes the program,
- ii) withdraws from the program,
- iii) is dropped from the program based on established criteria, or
- iv) is assisted in enrolling in another approved program to complete the requirements for the authorization in the event the program closes.

Next Steps

Based on the COA's discussion, staff will prepare an agenda item for the April 2011 COA meeting with proposed language for COA consideration and possible action. If at the April meeting the COA takes action to recommend new language for Precondition 1, staff would prepare an agenda item for the Commission.